

Parents: Be More Involved!



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Be More Involved!

Kids who are close to their parents are the least likely to engage in risky behaviors. The more involved you are in your children's lives, the more valued they'll feel and the more likely they'll be to respond to you. Try to schedule regular get-togethers with your children.

Establish "together time."

Establish a regular weekly routine for doing something special with your child — even if it's just going out for ice cream. Even a few minutes of conversation while you're cleaning up after dinner or right before bedtime can help the family catch up and establish the open communication that is essential to raising drug-free children.

Have family meetings.

Held regularly at a mutually agreed upon time, family meetings provide a forum for discussing triumphs, grievances, projects, questions about discipline, and any topic of concern to a family member. Ground rules help. Everyone gets a chance to talk; one person talks at a time without interruption; everyone listens, and only positive, constructive feedback is allowed. To get resistant children to join in, combine the get-together with incentives such as post-meeting pizza or assign them important roles such as recording secretary or rule enforcer.

Don't be afraid to ask where your kids are going, whom they'll be with and what they'll be doing.

Get to know your kid's friends — and their parents — so you're familiar with their activities.

Try to be there after school.

The "danger zone" for drug use is between 4 and 6 PM; arrange flextime at work if you can. If your child will be with friends, make sure there's adult supervision — not just an older sibling.

Eat meals together as often as you can.

Meals are a great opportunity to talk about the day's events, to unwind, reinforce and bond. Studies show that kids whose families eat together at least 5 times a week are less likely to be involved with drugs or alcohol.

Make Your Position Clear

Make your position clear when it comes to dangerous substances like alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Don't assume that your children know where you stand.

They want you to talk to them about drugs. State your position clearly; **if you're ambiguous, children may be tempted to become involved with tobacco products, alcohol or other drugs.**

Tell your children that you forbid them to use alcohol, tobacco, and drugs because you love them. (Don't be afraid to pull out all the emotional stops. You can say, "If you took drugs it would break my heart.") Make it clear that this rule holds true even at other people's houses.

Will your child listen?

Most likely. According to research, when a child decides whether or not to use alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, **a crucial consideration is "What will my parents think?"**

